

“Bihan Chhina” a Farming Based Festival of Western Odisha

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ABSTRACT

Odisha is an agriculturally dominant state. Here, more than 60 percent people make their living by farming. Looking at Odisha from the regional area, West Odisha is a well-developed region which is consisted of 10 districts on the basis of language. Different kinds of people live here. His folk beliefs are discussed along with the annual festivals of the people of different communities living in western Odisha. Many festivals are celebrated here. Mainly based on agriculture. People from here have learned and celebrated it from generation to generation.

KEYWORDS: festival, people believe, deity, folk dance

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Thirteen festivals are celebrated every year in Odisha. Accordingly, many festivals are celebrated in Western Odisha. 'Bihan Chhina' festival is one of them. Apart from the 'Nuakhai' festival, one of the main agricultural festivals is Bihan chhina. Just as during the Nuankhai festival, after growing the crops (paddy), the festival is celebrated by accepting the new fruits, the reverse is the case during the Bihan Chhina festival. This festival is celebrated before the scattering of crops.

This festival is celebrated on Sunday/Wednesday (Good day) of Baisakha Shuklapakshya Akshaya Tritiya according to Malika (future prediction book). All the people of the village, from the young to the old, come to celebrate this festival. Women cannot participate in it. Those of the family who wish to participate in this festival wake up early in the morning and bathe, wear clean clothes or new clothes. Elderly people mainly wear white dhoti and white banyan. There is no problem whether you can wear new clothes or not according to your convenience, but everyone needs to get a new towel. Having prepared in this way, the people leave for the 'debta ghara' (house of the deity) with various puja instruments. Among the worship instruments are coconuts, vermilion, paddy rice, betel leaves, flowers, incense, etc. In addition, chickens, sheep, goats are taken

away. Apart from these, there is a great need for 'Mada' (village wine) and milk.

This festival is celebrated not only by the people of one village but also by the people of all the villages that include the debta ghar (house of deity). The people of the village which has the main deity worship that goddess as the main one. But this does not mean that they despise other gods and goddesses. Let's say that my village Chhata (village name) is the house of deities, then 19 deities are worshiped here. For example, Chatapiplen, Budharja, Jhakkarbudhra, Dharani Bakparsen, Samlei, 19 deities are worshiped at 19 places. Among them, several deities are worshiped prominently by the people of each village.

Every year this festival is celebrated by people but there are some prominent people without whose presence this festival is not possible. They are 'Naria', 'Gountia' and 'Dihari'. They are present in almost everything from the beginning to the end of the festival. These three persons are elected from each village. 'Naria' is one who worships. 'Gountia' contributes to the victimised with the worshipped, the victim is offered from his hand. In the same way 'Dihari' turn into deity. the deity enters inside his body . infact, these three people of each village sit together to discuss the celebration of 'Vihan chhina'

festival and fix the date and time according to Malika. By them, according to Malika, the worship starts from 9-10 in the morning.

At the time of worshipping the deity, the deity enter into Dihari's body (kalishi). People beg for his blessings and express their prolem before him. The view when Kalisi blooms is mesmerizing. Each dihari receives a kalishi of one deity. He who looks will open his long hair and meditate. When Kalishi comes, the deity performs a strange dance. First, the deity sits in the shrine and shakes her hair and head and performs an attractive dance. Naria and Gauntia are on the two sides of the deity and the village people stay around them. After the dance, she addresses Naria and Gauntia as Pujari. Infact, one who worships the Goddess is addressed as a 'Pujhari' (priest). Then there is a conversation between the priest and the deity. E.g

Deity: pujari, Why did you call me?

Priest: Mother, what will we say? you know everything.

Deity: If i don't know, who will know!

Priest: Mother, look at your Priests standing for blessing.

Deity: is that problem? I am always there for you.

At the time of saying this, the village people play their hands with lips to create a sound (bobo).

Deity: Give me some incense.

Then incense is offered to the deity by putting incense on the burning coals in an earthen vessel. Then the goddess stands up and dances on the floor. After dancing for some time the priest says-

Priest: It's ok mother now go for your blessings and we became happy.

After leaving the Kalisi, Bihan Chhina (seed collection) begins. Two bullock's horns are made of pipal leaves and plough are made of tree wood. Then there are two bullocks and one is dressed as a ploughshare. They are also called three brothers. Dressed like this, they plough. Then water is poured from the top to make mud and the rice seeds are sifted. After the mud is finished, the gountias bathe in water to clean themselves and wear new clothes and then the people are given seeds (grains) by the gountia. Selection of these seeds is also done according to the malika. Every year, any paddy from white, red and yellow is chosen. At the time of

receiving paddy, people only receive seeds in new towel. People pay their own bills for grains and seeds. This investigation is also done according to the rules. People enter their bill facing east and worship the 'Yogini', 'soil deity', 'snake deity' with the puja equipment and scatter the seed and wish for a good harvest. This seed research work is done by people according to their convenience. Most of the people scatter this seed on the festival day but some people who are late keep this seed outside the house for a day or two and pray on an auspicious day.

Purpose: Since this festival is celebrated every year, it has some purpose. This festival is celebrated for many good reasons. It is mainly done for the purpose of good harvest of the upcoming crop (kharif crop). This is its primary purpose. Apart from this, for keeping the village happy, for the well-being of the family and for those who are thinking of their own or family's success or unique work.

So, it can be definitely said that 'Bihan Chhina' is a major festival of West Odisha. It is unique among the many festivals based on agriculture. This festival is celebrated not only in western Odisha but also in some border areas near it. A few days before the celebration of the festival, a man of the village plays Dibri (a kind of musical instrument) and gives information about the day of the festival. At this time, a wonderful atmosphere is created in the village crowd. People's passion for celebrating the festival is getting stronger and stronger. People keep collecting things for the festival. Those who victimises goats and sheep prepare it long in advance. People jump for joy. During the festival, Naria, Gountia and Dihari take the victim head and distribute it as their rewards. Apart from all this, the festival shows brotherhood among the people. The people of that family take the victim goat & sheep and eat the food and invite their friends and relatives. So, to be honest, this festival brings joy and happiness to the lives of the villagers every year.

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